

BILL # HB 2520

TITLE: chemical fire response; task force

SPONSOR: Landrum Taylor

STATUS: As Introduced

REQUESTED BY: House

PREPARED BY: John Malloy

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Description

The bill establishes the Arizona Chemical Fire Response Coordination Task Force, consisting of members from each municipality in the state with a population of 75,000 persons or more. The Task Force would be required to establish a tracking program that identifies commercial and industrial buildings that have hazardous materials to ensure fire code compliance. The Task Force would also have reporting requirements.

HB 2520 would also require the Arizona Emergency Response Commission (AERC) within the Department of Emergency Management (DEMA) to ensure that mandatory hazardous materials training programs for on-site command personnel address standardized protection of the public health during and after a chemical or other toxic fire event.

Finally, the bill includes coordination requirements primarily between the Department of Health Services (DHS), the Arizona Poison Control System and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to the extent that funding is available.

Estimated Impact

JLBC Staff estimates a state impact of \$19,000 from the Air Quality Fee Fund to DEQ based on the agency's estimate of increased responsibilities associated with this legislation. DEMA has indicated that there would be no cost in the agency's responsibility of overseeing training programs related to hazardous materials, as this oversight responsibility is already being undertaken by the agency. Other coordination activities delineated in the bill could be funded utilizing approximately \$300,000 from non-General Fund sources in the Department of Health Services' budget.

The local impact of HB 2520 would depend on whether the bill requires the creation of a new single-jurisdiction hazardous materials tracking database. The Arizona League of Cities and Towns believes that the bill has limited impact as they believe that current individual city tracking programs are sufficient to meet the bill's requirements.

Analysis

HB 2520 would require DHS to coordinate all public health and risk assessment issues associated with a chemical or other toxic fire event. DHS would also be required to consult with DEQ and the Arizona Poison Control system on the public health risks of exposure to a chemical fire and report on those potential public health risks to the public as soon as practicable after the event. The bill does not appropriate any additional funding to DHS for this purpose. However, the agency does receive monies from two sources for activities similar to those delineated in the bill: 1) \$100,000 annually from the Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund to conduct risk assessments on contaminated sites and 2) \$216,100 from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to conduct environmental health consultations and risk assessments for communities that are exposed to environmental hazards. These monies could be utilized by the department for costs associated with this legislation.

Under HB 2520, DEQ would be required to perform additional sampling in the event of a toxic fire and has estimated those costs to be \$19,000 annually. These expenditures would be for equipment and other associated costs and would be funded from the Air Quality Fee Fund.

Local Government Impact

While cities affected by HB 2520 currently track hazardous materials as detailed in the bill, it is not known if a centralized database would be required so as to allow for information sharing or if the current structure would allow for the delivery of information absent a centralized database. DEMA has indicated that a potential source of funding for information technology (IT) enhancements to improve hazardous materials tracking would be Federal Homeland Security monies should those enhancements be deemed necessary by the Task Force.

The Arizona League of Cities and Towns has estimated limited impact as a result of HB 2520. According to the League, municipalities with populations over 75,000 are already performing functions specifically delineated in this bill. Limited costs may be borne by municipalities insofar as they are required to staff the Chemical Fire Response Coordination Task Force and prepare updates and reports.

2/15/05